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UA3/10/2 Fall Semester Underway

WKU President's Office - Caboni

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

With the fall semester fully underway, I want to thank each of you for your tremendous efforts in achieving a smooth beginning for our students and the entire campus community.

This semester we welcomed the most qualified freshman class in WKU's history, with an average GPA of 3.39 and an average ACT score of 23.2. The change in admission standards for this fall's class was an important step in the right direction. As we discussed at Convocation, we will continue implementing additional changes this year, working to ensure every student we admit has a reasonable chance of graduating. Our focus must become recruiting future graduates, not freshmen. By strategically shaping our first-year class, we will elevate our student success metrics and our retention performance.

Preliminary numbers also suggest we increased our first to second year persistence numbers by almost 1.5 percentage points. Even more impressive is the persistence gain among low-income students of 2.7 percentage points. We also lifted our overall six-year graduation rate 2.7 points to 53.4%, the highest in WKU history.

While these demonstrate positive movement, we have significant work ahead as we execute toward the goals in [*Climbing to Greater Heights*](#), our new strategic plan, and work to achieve an 80% persistence rate and a 60% graduation rate. Every conversation we have must start with, "How does this affect our students? How do we support them, and how do we help them graduate?"

This becomes doubly important in the context of the state's new performance funding model, which will reward improvement in these areas with additional state resources. We will continue to align our internal strategies to position WKU to benefit from a formula that will shift funds from one Kentucky university to another.

As we hone our retention efforts, we each play a role in providing our students an environment in which they can thrive. How well we integrate them into the academic life of the institution, especially during the crucial first five weeks of their enrollment with us, predicts best their persistence and eventual graduation. Intentionally creating opportunities and actively encouraging them to engage with you individually will reap great long-term benefits.

Thank you for all you do to serve our students and enable their successes.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Caboni'.

Timothy C. Caboni